

Libby Community Advisory Group

Meeting Summary

April 26, 2001

Introductions

Gerald Mueller and Libby Community Advisory Group (CAG) members present introduced themselves. Gayla Benefield introduced Eileen Carney who represented House District 82 in the last Legislature. With the CAG's approval, Representative Carney became a CAG member. A list of all of the members in attendance is attached below as Appendix 1.

Agenda

Mr. Mueller reviewed an agenda for this meeting including the following topics:

- Inspector General Update
- Agency Reports
 - EPA
 - ATSDR
 - Lincoln County
- Community Health Center Grant
- Memorial
- Public Comment

Inspector General Update

Gerald Mueller reported that as directed by the CAG at its April 5, 2001 meeting, he did write to Inspector General Nikki Tinsley, inviting her to this meeting to discuss her report. Ms. Tinsley was unable to come to this meeting. She intends to invite to come with her to a future CAG meeting EPA officials who can respond to questions posed by Don Wilkens on behalf of the CAG in the letter to Ms. Tinsley, and particularly what actions EPA is taken so that the experience here in Libby is not repeated anywhere else in this country. She stated that if she is unable to bring the EPA officials, then she will come alone. Mr. Mueller stated that he will continue to communicate with Ms. Tinsley to schedule her appearance at a future CAG meeting.

EPA Report

Paul Peronard, EPA On-Scene Coordinator, and Wendy Thomi, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator reported on behalf of EPA on the following topics:

Schools

In February of this year, Kirby Maki wrote to EPA alerting us to asbestos contamination at the high school and middle school tracks. In response, EPA began talking with people present at the time to identify areas that should be sampled. Initial sampling has been conducted at the High School, Middle School, Plummer and Asawoods Elementary Schools, Fireman's Park and Lincoln Playground, and St. John's Day Care Facility. Cleanup of these sites is now the top priority and will be completed this summer. EPA intends to meet with parents and teachers to discuss what has been found.

Mr. Peronard passed out aerial photographs of these sites, except for Asa Wood Elementary and St. John's Day Care Facility, showing the location of surface and below grade sampling completed to date and the sampling results. The Asa Wood data had not yet plotted and results

were not yet back from St. John's Day Care. A summary of the aerial photo information follows.

- Plummer Elementary - Asbestos was found on and below the surface at the site of the old ice rink, and emergency action was taken to cover the contamination with plastic and sand.
- High School - Asbestos was found beneath the asphalt surface of the running track. Contamination was not found inside the track oval on the football field. Because the asbestos was covered with asphalt, no immediate action was taken. Cleanup will begin after school is out for the summer.
- Middle School - Asbestos was again found under the asphalt track surface. The contaminated material was at a lower depth than at the High School. Again, contamination was not found inside the track oval.
- Asa Wood Elementary and Lincoln Playground - No asbestos was detected at these locations.
- Fireman's Park - One subsurface sample contained trace amounts of asbestos. Sampling will be expanded.

CAG Member Comment - We need to know when the asbestos contaminated materials were placed at the schools and who about it.

Response - The contaminated material was placed on the high school and middle school tracks sometime in the early 1970's. The tracks were paved in 1983. The material used at the ice rink at Plummer Elementary was different than that used to surface the tracks. EPA will obtain a history of the contamination.

CAG Member Question - Have other schools that participated in track meets after the contaminated material was used to surface the tracks and before it was paved been notified?

Answer - No.

CAG Member Question - Will EPA conduct a risk assessment for kids who used the contaminated facilities at the schools?

Answer - EPA will develop an analytical exposure model to assess the risk of running on the contaminated tracks and using the ice rink. Running on the track was probably a significant exposure. EPA is also considering the need for initial medical screening of such children.

CAG Member Question - Has the old high school and central playground been sampled?

Answer - EPA will publish a list of sites that should be sampled with a priority for doing so for public review and comment.

CAG Member Question - Has W.R. Grace been asked about where contaminated material was used to identify sites that should be sampled?

Answer - W.R. Grace has been asked to identify old employees that might know and for written records. We haven't yet gotten a response. EPA will also its interviews of community members to identify sites that should be sampled.

CAG Member Comment - I am concerned about EPA's priorities for sampling and cleanup activities. Workers who had the highest exposures, homes with contaminated vermiculite insulation, and schools should have the highest priorities for action.

Response - Mr. Peronard has recommended that EPA become involved in house cleanups in Libby. A decision on this recommendation will require considering the legal and budget ramifications.

CAG Member Comment - EPA should meet with parents at the schools before schools are let out for the summer to explain the sampling and discuss medical screening for the children.

Response - EPA will publish a fact sheet for each school and follow-up on possible school meetings. We may also hold a large town meeting on this subject.

Comment by Dan Strausbaugh - ATSDR will assist EPA with the development of age appropriate health information.

CAG Member Comment - Lara Sedler should also be involved in developing information because of the possible mental health concerns related to possible school children exposures.

Cleanups

- Screening Plant - The roads that will be used to haul the contaminated materials now being stored at the screening plant to the mine are being prepared. Hauling is planned to begin on May 15. Rainy Creek Road will be closed and gated. The first one-half mile of the Road will be paved. A decontamination station will also be established to clean trucks hauling the contaminated materials.
- KDC Properties - Beginning in June the area known as the Kootenai Bluffs which is across the Kootenai River from the loading station will be cleaned. Cleanup of the screening plant and the KDC Properties should be finished this summer.
- Railroad tracks - BN has begun cleanup activities downtown. EPA considers clean up of the tracks lower priority because people normally don't dig in the track ballast.
- Export Plant - W.R. Grace has filed a new restoration plan that provides for removal of the buildings. Contaminated materials have worked out of building walls. W.R. Grace will also backfill around building footings. This work should be completed by mid-summer.
- Other Residential Properties - Sampling indicates that some residences have 3-8% unexfoliated vermiculite in their yards. EPA will scoop up and remove these contaminated soils.

CAG Member Question - Will the W.R. Grace bankruptcy affect funding for the cleanup activities?

Answer - EPA has the money for cleanups this summer.

CAG Member Question - If EPA gets involved with house cleanups, where disposal of the contaminated materials occur?

Answer - At first blush, EPA will probably not want to take expanded materials such as vermiculite insulation to the mine for disposal. If we do get involved, EPA will probably work with the County to use a new cell at its landfill.

CAG Member Question - Is EPA conducting additional sampling at Millwork West?

Answer - Yes. Recent sampling indicates that contaminated materials have been working out of the walls and that material captured on plastic during power washing spilled when the plastic was removed.

CAG Member Question - What about the planer building?

Answer - We have seen some contaminated material. EPA still has some issues in the buildings. Millwork West will not be allowed back in the planer building until it is cleared.

CAG Member Question - There is a housing development near the mine. Will materials disposed

at the mine be covered to prevent contamination being blown off the site and onto the housing area?

Answer - There will be dust abatement and air monitoring to prevent air blown contamination leaving the mine.

Audience Member Comment - Contamination is worse in the Zonolite used in gardens than house insulation.

Response - Sampling has shown fewer asbestos fibers in gardens than in insulation.

Phase 2 of the Residential Sampling

- Scenario 1 - Several volunteers in a variety of homes are wearing small pumps to sample air as they go about their normal activities in their homes for a three day period. Three or four additional volunteers will complete this scenario. Results to date indicate that asbestos concentrations measured via the pumps are higher than the passive sampling previously conducted.
- Scenario 2 - Some Libby residents will voluntarily relocate to a hotel while an EPA team wearing protective clothing and respirators samples the air while conducting aggressive, spring cleaning-type activities. Twelve homes have been sampled using this technique. The measured asbestos concentrations in this scenario are higher than scenario 1.
- Scenario 3 - EPA personnel wearing protective gear will go into attics and sample air while simulating repair of electrical wiring, installation of ceiling fan, and other activities likely to disturb vermiculite attic insulation. A key question in this scenario is the impact of the attic activity on the air quality in the rest of the house. Similar tests are being made in homes containing vermiculite from Libby located in other parts of the country.
- Scenario 4 - EPA will sample gardens.

Superfund National Priorities Listing

EPA has initiated the process for listing at least the Libby vermiculite mine site on the National Superfund Priorities List (NPL). The listing could occur either as one site including all of Libby or as two sites with the mine and City listed separately. Under the first option, the entire City would remain on the NPL until the mine is cleaned up. Under the second, cleanup could occur in the City and the City could be removed from the list even if the mine would remain. The listing decision would be made through a public process involving consultation with the Governor and DEQ and the people of Libby. If the Governor and/or people of Libby oppose listing, it probably would not happen. A detailed discussion of the pros and cons of listing will occur at a future CAG meeting.

CAG Member Question - If listing occurs, who would be responsible for cleanup?

Answer - EPA Region 8 would be responsible.

CAG Member Question - Has a schedule been established for the listing decision?

Answer - No.

CAG Member Comment - Why is there an option? Either a site is contaminated and qualified for listing, or it isn't.

Response - The first question to be answered is, is a cleanup over the long haul warranted? The second question is, does the state and/or community have a better way to pursue cleanup than the NPL? One consideration is funding. The Superfund Program just took a big budget cut. If it is

listed, Libby will be competing nationwide with other listed sites for funding.

CAG Member Question - Would Troy be involved in the cleanup under the NPL?

Answer - The data to date supports a listing of the Libby valley. Separate data collection would be required to list Troy.

CAG Evaluation

Wendy Thomi passed out a form to evaluate the CAG. She stated that the form is geared towards CAG members, but EPA could also learn from the evaluation of people who regularly attend CAG meetings as well. The form included a self-addressed stamp envelope so that completed forms would go to the EPA national headquarters office. After they are reviewed at headquarters they will be returned to Ms. Thomi for her review. Ms. Thomi also introduced Crystal Murphy who will be working one-half time at the Libby Information Office to allow Linda Newsome to spend one-half of her time doing additional outreach to the community.

ATSDR Report

Dan Strausbaugh, Montana Representative of ATSDR, reported on behalf of his agency on the following topics.

Medical Screening Results Letters

Mailing of the medical screening results letters was completed on April 4. All participants should have received their letter by April 15. Anyone who hasn't received their letter or who has questions should call the ATSDR office in Libby. Physician questions about the result letters should also be directed to the Libby ATSDR office.

Medical Screening Data and Analysis

Delivery of first round of medical screening data to ATSDR from its contractor, NORC, is on target for late May. ATSDR Scientists will meet in mid May with Dr. Black, Dr. Spence, and others in Denver to discuss types of analysis that can be conducted for the final report in the first round of screening results.

Second Round of Initial Medical Screening

The second round of the initial medical screening is tentatively scheduled to begin early August. This start date was chosen so that the original Libby medical screening team can be reestablished. As soon as the beginning date is established, ATSDR will arrange to advertise the second round of medical screening on local (Channel 10) and in regional and appropriate national media. ATSDR is working to identify ways to accommodate the large class reunion scheduled to occur in Libby on July 28-29.

The second round will use the same protocol as the first round. Screening will be offered to former workers of W.R. Grace Company, household contacts of former workers, and individuals who resided, worked, attended school or participated in activities in the Libby area for six continuous months prior to December 31, 1990. ATSDR has chosen not to change the protocol because changes in protocol would require ~~Internal~~ **Institutional** Review Board **approval** and to maintain continuity of database to ensure that the information gathered can survive scientific scrutiny and legal challenges.

CT Study

The objective of the CT study is to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional chest x-rays to identify lung abnormalities associated with asbestos. ATSDR is continuing to discuss implementation of the protocol for the CT study with its contractor NORC, a team of medical experts, and St. John's Hospital personnel. The study is expected to begin June 6 and will take approximately nine weeks to finish the data collection.

Public Health Activities in Libby

ATSDR remains committed to completing public health priority activities in Libby. We received \$5,750,000 from EPA to fund public health activities in Libby during FY2000. For FY2001, ATSDR received a direct Congressional appropriation of \$6,000,000 to fund public health activities at Libby and agency activities at over 300 vermiculite sites elsewhere in the nation. ATSDR will work with medical experts from Federal, State and County agencies to identify the appropriate follow-up screening necessary to ensure that individuals at high risk of adverse health effects from asbestos exposure are identified. ATSDR has also committed to establishing and maintaining a registry of exposed former workers of W.R Grace facility in Libby.

CAG Member Question - Will the medical studies funded by ATSDR be coordinated with the University of Montana genetic researchers?

Answer - ATSDR is in communication with the UM researchers and researchers nationwide.

Lincoln County Report

Ron Anderson and Dr. Brad Black reported on behalf of Lincoln County.

Ron Anderson

The mechanism of the investigation pursuant to the County ordinance is still being worked out. DEQ is upgrading the ambient air sampling for asbestos fibers. At present the state does not have an ambient air asbestos standard.

CAG Member Question - Currently all ambient air sampling is being conducted on top of the Court House. Is the one site adequate?

Answer - The Court House monitoring is being conducted pursuant to specific EPA requirements and has been deemed by EPA to be representative of the Libby Valley.

Dr. Black

The County was recently notified by the Health Services Administration that the Rural Outreach Grant to fund the CARD Clinic asbestos and related social services was denied. Some 198 applicants competed for grants, and 12 were funded. The grant reviewers apparently misunderstood that because the Libby Clinic was up and running that additional funding was not needed. The CARD Clinic was funded initially by grants from W.R. Grace and St. John's Hospital, but especially in light of the W.R. Grace bankruptcy announcement, additional funding is needed for the Clinic to continue operation. A letter is being sent to Senator Baucus to explain the misunderstanding. CAG support may be needed. We will continue to pursue funding for the Clinic.

CAG Member Question - Are you still seeking the same grant?

Answer - The grant decision is not appealable. However, Senator Baucus will conduct substantial

debriefing of the grant reviewers.

Community Health Center Grant

Lara Sedler read a letter of support by the CAG for the grant request to the Department of Health and Human Services for \$650 per year to establish a federally qualified community health center that would provide primary care at no or reduced costs to people with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. She stated that 53% of the population of Lincoln County have incomes at or below the 200% guideline. She also stated that several state and federal governmental officials support the grant request.

CAG Action - The CAG unanimously agreed to support the letter, and Ms. Sedler's draft was circulated for member signatures.

Memorial

Mike Switzer proposed that a site be found to serve as a memorial to those that have died because of disease caused by Libby asbestos exposure. White crosses would be erected for each asbestos victim. Mr. Switzer requested names of people who died from asbestos-related disease and volunteers to help make the crosses. He stated that the goal was to have a memorial in place before Senator Baucus and other state and federal officials come to Libby for the May hearing.

Public Comment

CAG Member Question - Why don't we have a medical trust fund established so that we might fund the CARD Clinic?

Answer - The Community Health Center will be a community based non-profit capable of managing funds in a responsible and accountable manner. The Center will in effect be the "bucket" into which funds can be donated by federal agencies and private philanthropy. The Center can create a trust mechanism.

Audience Member Comment - The press should publish in the paper how much money has been spent and how much has remained in the Libby community as a result of the effort by asbestos victims to address our asbestos problems.

CAG Member Comment - We should thank Representative Carney for her efforts on our behalf in the recent session of the Montana Legislature.

CAG Member Comment - TOSC has mailed a needs assessment to CAG members. Please fill them out and mail them back to Mr. Mellott at Montana Tech.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 17, 2001 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Ponderosa Room of Libby City Hall.

Appendix 1
CAG Member Attendance List
April 26, 2001

Members	Group/Organization Represented
K.W. Maki	Libby School District #4
Don Wilkins	Lumber & Sawmill Workers
Sandy Wagner	Libby Resident
George Keck	Community Health Center
Mike Switzer	Asbestos Victim
Ron Anderson	Lincoln County
Wilbur Wilson	Senior Citizens
Bob Dedrick	Asbestos Victim
George Bauer	City of Libby
Joyce Baeth	City of Libby
Dr. Brad Black	Lincoln County Health Officer/CARD Clinic
David F. Latham	The Montanian
Rick Palagi	St. John's Hospital
Wendy Thomi	EPA Community Involvement
Paul Peronard	EPA On-Scene Coordinator
Clinton Maynard	Area Asbestos Research Group
Gayla Benefield	LCAVRO
Leroy Thom	Former Grace Employee
Dan C. Strausbaugh	ATSDR/Montana Office
Robert Foote	Libby Ministerial Association
Eileen Carney	State Representative
Norita Skramstad	Asbestos Victim